

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for detecting the presence of particles in a sample comprising;
placing a fluid sample into a sedimentation container containing a slanted solid phase at a location above the slanted solid phase,
sedimenting particles in a sample across the slanted solid phase where the solid phase contains at least one immobilized binding agent capable of binding to at least one particle in the sample, and
detecting particles bound to the solid phase,
wherein the slanted solid phase is slanted with respect to the sedimentation path.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein the immobilized binding agent comprises plural specific binding agents.
3. The method of claim 2 wherein different specific binding agents are immobilized on different areas on the solid phase.
4. The method of claim 1 wherein said sedimenting comprises centrifuging the sample.
5. The method of claim 1 wherein at least part of the container contains a density gradient during sedimentation.
6. The method of claim 1 wherein the particles are cells or fragments thereof.
7. The method of claim 1 wherein the particles are at least one type of microorganism.
8. The method of claim 7 wherein the microorganism is a virus.
9. The method of claim 1 further comprising adding a specific binding agent to either the particles in the liquid sample or to the particles bound to the solid phase.

10. The method of claim 1 wherein the particles are stained before or after sedimentation.
11. A sedimentation chamber comprising an upper chamber for receiving a liquid sample with a bottom aperture for dispensing liquid into a lower chamber, a lower chamber containing a slanted solid phase, wherein an upper region of the lower chamber receives liquid from the upper chamber.
12. The sedimentation chamber of claim 11 wherein the lower chamber further comprises a specific binding agent immobilized on the upper surface of the slanted solid phase.
13. The sedimentation chamber of claim 12 further comprising a strip containing a binding agent wherein the strip covers at least part of the slanted solid phase.
14. A sedimentation chamber comprising a chamber for receiving a liquid sample and containing a strip having a plurality of regions transverse to the longitudinal axis of the strip, and a plurality of specific binding agents immobilized on the strip wherein each of said regions has only one specific binding agent immobilized thereon.
15. A strip of specific binding agents for binding particles comprising;
an elongated sheet having a plurality of regions transverse to the longitudinal axis of the sheet, and
a plurality of specific binding agents immobilized on the elongated sheet wherein each of said regions has only one specific binding agent immobilized thereon.
16. The strip of claim 15 wherein the elongated sheet is curved about an axis parallel to the longitudinal axis of the sheet and the specific binding agents are immobilized on the concave side of the sheet.
17. The strip of claim 15 wherein the elongated sheet is composed of material deformable to form a curved surface, curved about an axis parallel to the longitudinal axis of the sheet, inside a centrifuge tube under centripetal force.

18. The strip of claim 17 wherein the material is denser than a liquid sample.